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ABSTRACT

The report investigated the educational policy of Federal and state governments toward American Indians in California from 1850 to 1934. In California the fate of official efforts and non-efforts at educating Indians can be divided into 3 distinct periods. The period between 1849 and 1870 was a time when virtually nothing was attempted. Between 1870 and 1920 the principal focus was on education in Federal day and boarding schools. Finally, by the third decade of the present century the public schools assumed primary responsibility for Indian education. The dominant theme of this report was the sheer physical destruction and exploitation of Indians by white settlers, often with at least the passive support of the state government. Educated estimates place the Indian population as high as 260,000 in 1769; 100,000 in 1848 at the dawn of the American period; and less than 20,000 by 1880. For all its inadequacies and misadventures which became legend over the next century, the Federal government did assume responsibility for some measure of Indian welfare. The state, on the other hand, focused most of its efforts on exclusion. The election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932 and the arrival on the national scene of Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier produced a substantial shift in national attitudes toward Indians. (FF)

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FEDERAL AND STATE ROLES IN THE EDUCATION OF INDIANS: THE CALIFORNIA EXPERIENCE, 1850-1934

It must be acknowledged that recipients or victims of policies, in this case Indians, are in the best position to describe what it was like to be educated at a given time and place. Yet, except for a few testimonials and oral history presentations, evidence from the recipient's perspective is rare. There is likely to remain a need and opportunity for study from this vantage point for some time. On the other hand, published reports, correspondence, and other documentary evidence produced by policy makers and implementors is available through conventional sources. In the case of Indian education these sources are hardly overworked, and in spite of their obvious bias, they can tell us a good deal about the policy makers perspective, his purposes, and the policies themselves.

One need not look at the Indian experience in the context of non-white education in America very long before realizing that something is different here. For all the similarities in local neglect, segregation, discrimination, and inferior programs which characterized the educational opportunities provided racial and ethnic minorities generally, by the

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last third of the 19th century Indians became the target of a formidable Federal effort to acculturate them. Their precarious hold on physical survival forced the Government into providing them with some form of protection, or permitting their outright destruction.

An element of compassion aside, there was need for a pacification policy, one which if successful would protect white settlers in their ever expanding march for new territory. The perceived fruits of pacification, e.g. social stability, peace, and harmony were powerful enough to stimulate the Federal Government into accepting acculturation through education as the most effective means for accomplishing the task. To the extent that this is an accurate reflection of the Government's attitude, it ran counter to the segregationist spirit which afflicted Indians and other nonwhites on the local level and all other nonwhites nationally.

In California the fate of official efforts and nonefforts at educating Indians can be divided into three rather distinct periods. The period between 1849 and 1870 was a time when virtually nothing whatever was attempted. Between 1870 and 1920 the principal focus was on education in Federal day schools and boarding schools. Finally, by the third decade of the present century the public schools assumed primary responsibility for Indian education, although a few had been involved on a very modest basis since 1890. While the focus of this presentation is narrow, centering as it does on institutionalized education, it must not be forgotten that the dominant theme of poverty, which influenced greatly the course and quality of Indian education, was largely the product of an inequitable land policy of enormous proportions.

Except for acknowledging its absence, there is little that can be said about white influenced Indian education in the first two decades after statehood. The dominant theme during this period was the sheer physical destruction and exploitation of Indians by white settlers, often with at least the passive support of the California government. Educated estimates place the Indian population as high as 260,000 in 1769, 100,000 in 1848 at the dawn of the American period, and less than 20,000 by 1880. A rather thorough accounting made by Special Indian Agent C. E. Kelsey in 1906 turned up slightly over 17,000 full-blooded Indians in California, of whom 5,200 were living on reservations.[1]

During the state's early history any notion of Indian rights was either ignored or consciously rejected. California's first governor, Peter H. Burnett, accepted the annihilation of Indians as part of their destiny. While viewing a war of extermination against them with "painful regret," he accepted it as inevitable.[2] Apparently there was actually little regret. Outside of the larger cities the murder of Indians was socially acceptable and commonly practiced. A white man who stole an Indian's horse and murdered him might be subject to prosecution for thievery, but likely not for murder.[3] Aside from murder, it was not uncommon for Indian youth to be captured and used as servants during the 1850's, 1860's, and 1870's. As early as April, 1850, the legislature approved an act for the "Government and Protection of Indians" which legalized the indenturing of Indians.[4]

For all its inadequacies and misadventures which would become legend over the next century, the Federal Government did assume responsibility for some measure of Indian welfare. The state, on the other hand, focused

most of its early effort on exclusion. Schooling is a case in point. Except for an infinitesimal number of Indian children living under the care of white families, there was simply no schooling provided. During the 1865-1866 term, for example, 63 out of 1,078 Indian children living under the guardianship of white persons reportedly attended school at least once during the year.[5]

Largely as a result of hostility from the California Congressional delegation and legislature, the 18 treaties negotiated for the Federal Government by representatives of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs were not ratified by the U.S. Senate. Opponents were committed to seeing native Americans removed east of the Sierra Nevadas, and the fact that the treaties were less favorable to Indians than most previous treaties had been did not impress them.[6] Even had the treaties been approved, it is unlikely that their provisions calling for the Government to provide a school house, a superintendent, and "such assistant teachers as necessary," would have been accepted. The Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California, although approving the treaties generally, counseled against including the education sections because of the Indian's "present state of civilization and advancement."[7]

In 1864 Congress did provide a superintendent and up to four tracts of land for Indian reservations. Charles Maltby, the first superintendent appointed under the arrangement, recommended that an appropriation be made and constructive steps taken to provide a school on each of four reservations as early as 1865. Tule River and Hoopa Valley were the only reservations operating at the time. The special agent at Tule River aroused Maltby's ire by including in his annual report to the

Commissioner a statement that no schools had been attempted, "nor could I recommend the expenditure on such hopeless subjects."[8]

Nevertheless, the Government responded affirmatively, if incompletely, to Maltby's request in 1866 for a teacher and a school house at the Smith River, Round Valley, and Tule River agencies. At Hoopa Valley, where a poorly constructed and unused school house existed, funds were requested for repairs and teachers' salaries. Implementation of the request was slow and irregular, but by the early 1870's a crude form of schooling in these places became a sometime affair. Such reports as were made by teachers were generally positive concerning the obedience, attentiveness, capacity, and achievement of their charges. In 1872, two years after Congress authorized its first annual appropriation for Indian education in California, two teachers were reaching 127 students out of an Indian population of nearly 21,000. By comparison, Oregon and Washington together had slightly fewer Indians, 20,803, but 10 schools, 19 teachers, and were reaching 293 students.[9] Compared to the nation at large, school conditions for Indians in California during this period were commonly described as "deplorable," the term used by the U. S. Commissioner of Education.

As the Federal Government continued to assume the initiative, the next half century witnessed a narrowing and eventually a closing of the attendance gap between California and the rest of the nation. As far as goals, curricula, and administration of schools were concerned, there was considerable homogeneity across the nation. For purposes of acculturation it was assumed that the best education was that which prepared the Indian most completely for life as a white man, including

instruction in white man's history, language, dress, religion, moral code, economic system and value system. By 1905, as preparation for receiving their land allotments, Indians were even required to assume the names of white men. With a few harmless exceptions, traditional customs and culture were to be purged.

So that the job of cultural conversion could be accomplished with maximum efficiency and thoroughness, the Government at first preferred Federal boarding schools. Day schools suffered from an inability to compel full immersion in the cultural conversion process; consequently their civilizing influence was seen as less efficient. J. D. C. Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs described the problem as follows:[10]

> The barbarian child of the barbarian parent spends possibly six of the twenty-four hours of the day in a school room. Here he is taught the rudiments of the books, varied, perhaps by fragmentary lessons in the "good manners" of the superior race to which the teacher belongs. He returns, at the close of his day-school, to eat and play and sleep after the savage fashion of his race.

From the beginning, the focus on boarding schools was emphasized less in California than was the case nationally, although even there the several agents were quick to perceive the preference of higher officials. Nevertheless, economic constraints often required that only day schools be provided. In 1881, the first two day schools were opened among the gravely deprived and exploited Mission Indians of Southern California. This effort constituted the first public education provided them by any agency of government. By 1888 a total of eight day

schools were in operation among the Mission Indians, with four others located elsewhere in the state; one at Hoopa Valley, two at Round Valley, and one at Tule River. In addition, one boarding school was operating at Yuma. Altogether, something on the order of 440 students were being served in the day schools and 30 at the Yuma Boarding School.[11]

The pitiful quality of Indian education was apparent even to many of the Federal officials responsible for its implementation. From the beginning some of the most serious criticism originated from the Indian Service itself. Early among these was Superintendent Dorchester's report on Indian education issued in 1889, the first comprehensive field report made on the subject. Widespread neglect by Indian Office representatives, incompetent teachers, inefficient use of supplies, and poor provision of health, sanitation, and recreation, were all included as findings. After this tour, and one by Commissioner Thomas J. Morgan during the following year, several reforms were instituted, including more careful supervision, a uniform course of study, and the adoption of a merit system of appointment.[12]

Indian education, like the nation's public school system, was being systematized and institutionalized, but reform did not always imply advantage for Indian pupils. Indeed some of the more controversial policies became embedded in the system during the early 1890's. Enrollment was limited to Indian children between five and eighteen years of age living on reservations; for those children there was to be no escaping the system. Agents were held responsible for keeping the schools filled. Coersion, including the physical kidnapping of children and the withholding of

rations from parents, was permitted and sometimes even encouraged. Visits by pupils to the homes of their parents were discouraged.[13]

If the acculturation drive's high purpose was sometimes lost sight of by policy implementors, at least the high-handedness of that policy is not difficult to document. Indian dances and feasts, for example, were seen by Commissioner W. S. Jones in 1902 as "subterfuges to cover degrading acts and to disguise immoral purposes." The Superintendent of the Greenville School in California, and presumedly all other Indian school superintendents, was directed by the Commissioner to use his best efforts "in the suppression of these events."[14]

Some objections were raised to the harsh acculturation policy. G. Stanley Hall, one whose fame was growing in the child development movement, told the Department on Teaching of the National Education Association that the elementary education of Indians should occur in the native language. His criticism of Indian education was outspoken: "Why fit the young Indian, in the language of one of them, to clean the spitoons of the white man's civilization instead of helping him to develop his own? Why not make him a good Indian rather than a cheap imitation of the white man? Why teach him our Sunday School ditties, and let his marvelous, native music...be forgotten?"[15] Also subject to Hall's criticism was the fact that Indian school personnel paid too little attention to the Government's own Bureau of Ethnology.

Some gyrations over the relative merit of day and boarding schools, as well as inconsistencies in the administration of policy, notwithstanding, Indian education in 1910 was not markedly different from what it had been in 1890. More children were being reached to be sure. In California

Catholic mission boarding schools were still operating at Banning and San Diego, each enrolling approximately one hundred pupils. Reservation boarding schools continued operation at Fort Yuma, Hoopa Valley, and Round Valley; each with an enrollment of approximately one hundred; slightly more at Fort Yuma. Nonreservation boarding schools were maintained at Greenville and Fort Bidwell; the former enrolling 99, the latter, 79.

Consistent with the trend of the day, some 17 reservation day schools were in operation, ranging in enrollment from two to fifty-nine pupils, most having between twenty and thirty in attendance.[16] Of the several day schools, most were dilapidated and sadly in need of repair. Nearly half also suffered from lack of water. Nonetheless, by the early 1900's it was not unusual for Indian school superintendents to speak of the day school as "the most important factor in the civilization of the Indian," a clear contrast with the rhetoric of two decades earlier.[17]

Boarding schools were far from being deemphasized, however. A new and relatively well equipped non-reservation one had been established at Riverside in 1902. Presently the only Bureau of Indian Affairs school still operating in California, it was designed originally to accommodate 500 students, 320 more than Fort Yuma, the second largest boarding school. Although superior in several respects to other boarding schools in California, the goals and program of the Riverside school followed the national plan. Thus cultural conversion and practical training, necessary in coping with the white man's world, constituted the school's mission. The problem was that this purpose did not and likely could not be coordinated with the Indian's actual life style and needs at home.

Farm work was one of the early emphases at the Riverside school and one of the early disappointments as well, occupying half of the curriculum, while literary studies took up the other half. Simply finding a farmer who understood irrigation and cultivation of the soil as practiced in Southern California constituted a formidable personnel problem. The curriculum was organized so 40 pupils would be on the farm at all times. Girls too assumed "such work as farmer girls usually do," taking care of the house, cooking, bread making, caring for the milk, making butter, tending to the kitchen, raising poultry, milking a few cows, and "numerous duties which farmers' wives and daughters perform."[18] Good land and an adequate supply of water permitted the growing of vegetables in abundance and the production of numerous oranges from the school's grove.

Serving as kind of an induction into the dominate culture was the outing system. Nearly all boys and girls over fourteen years participated by being placed with Southern California families for training in home life and general house work. Wages earned by pupils were paid to the superintendent who deposited them in the student's bank savings account. Whether or not the system reflected practical and cultural training rather more than exploitation of students is a matter of conjecture. From the superintendent's viewpoint it was a source of pride and was seen as a key element in the acculturation process. Located 60 miles from Los Angeles in a fairly prosperous citrus belt community, the Riverside school (Sherman Institute) was well accepted by the local community, accruing a fair library donated by citizens, and even becoming something of a tourist attraction. Begging the larger question of appropriateness, the overall educational opportunities provided at Riverside were superior

to the rural reservation boarding school experiences in Northern California and to day school experiences all over the state.

The administration of Indian schools was often a bleak affair. Scandals involving various kinds of indiscretions by personnel were common. Yet agency correspondence suggests that perhaps the greatest scandal of all was simple incompetence. In complaining to the Commissioner about the performance of two teachers at the Bishop Day School in 1917, the superintendent testified that one had been unfavorable to the new course of study and had stated in his presence that if teachers did the work outlined for them, promoting pupils as rapidly as required, it would be but a very few years before "we shall have worked ourselves out of a job."[19] A need for enrollment might well have influenced some holding back of pupils, although more evidence would be needed before this assertion could be made with confidence.

As boarding school horrors went, most centered on the issues of corporal punishment and kidnappings. Students who lapsed into the unseemly habit of speaking their native language could expect to be whipped. But there were numerous other infractions meriting the same treatment. Superintendent Edgar Miller of the Greenville Indian School claimed that corporal punishment was in vogue immediately before his appointment in 1916. In that year the Indian Service investigated reasons behind the desertion of five girl students who left shortly after being whipped by the matron. For her part the matron felt justified in the action because "the girls had not arisen early enough in the morning to make a proper toilet before breakfast," or in other ways followed her orders.[20]

The precise motivation behind the indiscretions and sometime

unauthorized behavior of staff is difficult to infer with precision. It is likely, however, that incompetence, moral indignation based on ignorance of Indian culture, and a desire to keep marginal schools operating were factors. Superintendent E. M. Tardy of the Fort Bidwell School appeared highly distressed about the alleged moral degeneracy of Indian girls. Public schools, according to Tardy, were being used as "an excuse to keep away there [sic] children and at the camp where they can be used as prostitutes by any one that happens to have the price."[21] In view of this seemingly high moral purpose, Commissioner Cato Sells was persuaded that Tardy was justified in using extraordinary recruiting procedures

Having previously reminded Tardy of the Government's policy against unreasonable or unnecessary force, the Commissioner justified the forceful approach in this case as "the only course which I would be justified in pursuing under the circumstances."[22] Parents had long resisted Federal persuasion at allowing their children to attend the Fort Bidwell School. The school had a notorious reputation among Indians, not only for its recruiting and disciplinary practices, but also for its ineffective educational program. On the matter of recruiting, Superintendent Tardy's letter of October 12, 1913 to a contact person in a neighboring community is instructive:[23]

> My dear Mr. Cooley:
>
> The other day some of your people were over here and Ivan Quinn was with them, he said that there were several children over there that he could get to come here, and if you think he is all right you can fill his name on the enclosed blank and

have him get them and bring them over here. I think he could easily bring over six and I would pay him $25 for that many. Have him bring more if possible. He could [get] someone to help with a team and bring over ten or twelve.

Fred Wilson at Aden has been writing to Carsen to get three girls and a boy in school over there. You can have who ever you deputize. GET THESE FOUR WITHOUT FAIL. I enclose a letter from Royce.

Please let me hear from you immediately about this. Some Indian over there ought to be glad to get this money.

Very truly,

Eugene M. Taruy
Superintendent

Since the budget of a boarding school was set according to the number of students enrolled, it is likely that superintendents of marginal institutions were tempted to use heavy-handed recruiting tactics. The validity of this assertion well could be the topic of further investigation.

Also worthy of further study is the level of training and remuneration received by teachers in the Indian Service. One might expect that they were a little less well prepared, a little poorer paid, and lived under somewhat less desirable conditions than most public school teachers. Of the five day school teachers in the Mission Agency during 1923, for example, at least four were high school graduates. Three had at least two years of college. The teacher with three years of college earned $900 per year, while each of the other four earned $760. This compared with a

public school average annual salary for women elementary teachers in California of $1600.23.[24] No county paid its elementary teachers much under $1,200 in 1923.

Whatever the lapses in implementation, the system itself called for uniformity in day and boarding school operations: uniform curriculum, uniform operational regulations, uniform examinations, and uniform rates of financial support. "The central idea of the course of study," said Commissioner Sells in 1918, "is the elimination of needless studies and the employment of a natural system of instruction built out of actual activities in industry, esthetics, civics, and community interests."[25] The Commissioner's goals notwithstanding, Indian education was generally a low quality version of the curriculum found in traditional public schools. This does not imply that its expectations of students was lower, however.

Perhaps the examination system is most revealing for gaining insight into what the Federal educational policy makers were attempting to accomplish. All Government schools were required to give final examinations on schedule. The grade, content, date, and time were all scheduled by the centralized authority and sent to each school in a sealed envelope by registered mail. Not until 1928 were the uniform school examinations discontinued.[26] Standards too were centralized. No pupil was to be promoted from Grade III who had not attained a rating of at least 75 percent on the examination. From the recorded experience of students in the day schools of Southern California there is every reason to believe that few ever passed this hurdle. In the Mission Agency during 1923, 13 of the 47 students reported as attending day schools were in the third grade; none higher. The 13 third graders had been attending school for

an average of 6 years; their average age being 13. The average age of the first graders was 8, of second graders 11. [27]

By third grade standards of the day, the examination probably would have provided a challenge to white urban children of the middle class. For most Indians, it was simply incredible. Several of the questions were as follows: Who found America? What is cotton made of? Tell what you know about Eli Whitney. What is fiber? Where do the clouds come from? Write sentences using potatoes, marching, ashamed, truant, idle, loss, clouds, business. Given the prevailing goal of education, no reference to Indian culture was included.

The content of the grade 3 examination in Indian Service schools was to be divided as follows: [28]

English		
Conversational English (oral)	1	
Reading (oral)	1	
Spelling (written)	2/5	= 4.5
Language (written)	3/5	
Geography, Health, and History (written)	1 1/2	
Music (oral)	1/4	
Civics, Manners, and Correct Conduct (written)	3/4	= 1.0
Arithmetic (written)		= 1.5
Writing (write three quotations from memory)	3/5	
Drawing (inspections of class work)	2/5	= 1.0
Industrial Work (inspection)		= 2.0
		10 points

That an extensive number of Indian children were below grade level is undeniable. It was also the cause of some considerable concern within the Indian Service, as can be detected in correspondence between the national headquarters and agency offices, and between agency offices and individual teachers. As day school attendance dipped in the early 1920's, officials in the Commissioner's office suspected that teachers might be deliberately holding back pupils in an effort to save their positions. In June, 1923, Assistant Commissioner C. B. Merritt requested superintendents of the three California agencies to explain the retardations in their agencies. Superintendent C. L. Ellis of the Mission Agency expressed a disbelief that teachers had deliberately held pupils back, but claimed instead that undernourishment, home environment, and poor attendance were to blame. He did, nevertheless, write to each of the agency teachers asking them to explain the poor performance of students at their schools.

Mary Helen Fee, teacher at the small Volcan Mountain Day School, responded as follows:[29]

> So long as the Indian schools endeavors to ignore the facts that Indian children through poor instruction, home environment, and remote situation are almost all two or three years behind the white children in mental development on entering school, in addition to the handicap of not being familiar with the language in which they are taught, their retardations must go on, especially when there are inexperienced or poorly equipped teachers.

By the middle 1920's day schools were gradually being phased out, giving way to public schools. The public school in turn became the last

institution to be emphasized for acculturating Indians. Indian Service support for public school training resulted from a recognition that boarding and day schools were both expensive and ineffective. The realization had been growing for some time, but by the late 1910's it received formal attention. In 1917, Malcolm McDowell, Secretary of the Board of Indian Commissioners, attempted to find out why by conducting a national survey of superintendents. Was there a flaw in the system, he asked. The 87 responses reflected a total range of speculation; all the way from the Indian's alleged unsalvagable barbarism, to alleged ineptness by the Indian Service itself.[30]

The unpopularity of their own institutions was sometimes used by Federal officials to encourage Indian parents into accepting public schools. The following letter of April 26, 1919, to an Indian adult guardian in Death Valley, California, from Colonel L.A. Dorrington, Special Agent in Charge of the Reno Agency, serves to illustrate the point:

Dear Sir:

We are informed that there are several Indian children, of school age, living with you who are not in attendance at any school. The Government at Washington has sent word that every Indian child must go to school. It appears that the School Board at Death Valley is willing to permit these children to attend school and we are therefore advising you to enroll them as soon as possible. In the event this is not done it will be our duty to inform some Government Boarding School of the matter so that a recruiting officer will be sent to pick up the children and take them away to this Boarding School. You

probably would prefer to have your children at home and if you want them to remain with you, it will be necessary for you to see that they go to the local school. We are herewith enclosing an envelope for a reply from you in regard thereto.

Very truly,

L. A. Dorrington, Special Agent in Charge

It appears that the Indian Service provided its own initiative for the public school thrust, although this is another point which warrants more careful scrutiny. The query well might be: Did the Government accept public school education as an act of submission to external pressure, or did it generate most of its own enthusiasm for the idea? After half a century of effort through Federal, contract, and public schools, one may infer that the assimilation goal--whatever the original motivation for its adoption--was thoroughly ingrained into the Office of Indian Affairs' bureaucratic personality.

There were, to be sure, citizen groups that were pushing public schools for Indian children. The most notable of these in California during the 1910's was the Indian Board of Cooperation, headed by the Reverend Frederick G. Collett and his wife, the Reverend Beryl Bishop Collett. Notable Californians the likes of President David Starr Jordon of Stanford and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Edward Hyatt were included as members. The Colletts were tolerated by Federal officials and doubtlessly helped create a climate condusive to establishing public school facilities for Indians. But while Federal officials were seeking the admission of Indians into the nearest public school facility, consistent with their assimilation goal, the Colletts were oriented toward separate schools erected especially for Indians.

The ideological approval of public school attendance for Indians dates back to 1890, although the policy was not pursued vigorously until after 1910. Prior to 1890 only Indian children between five and seventeen years living with white families attended public school at all in California, and precious few attended even from this group; 36.54 percent in 1890, compared to 70.52 percent for Negro youth and 70.51 percent for white youth.[31] Between 1910 and 1920 a rather significant improvement took place. The 1910 Federal census found that 51.3 percent of Indians between ages 5 and 20 were attending school, compared with 61.6 percent for all rural children. In 1915, 316 Indian pupils attended public schools some time during the year, but four years later the number jumped to 2,199. A partial explanation rests in the fact that nationally the Federal Government spent $20,000 on public school tuition fees in 1915, but $200,000 each year between 1917 and 1923.[32]

In 1890 a relatively few school districts were invited to admit Indians, being rewarded for their cooperation at the rate of $10 per quarter per pupil.[33] By 1894, three California school systems enrolled 54 pupils under the plan. Community opposition, stimulated by prejudice as well as logistical and financial problems, reduced that number drastically after 1896. By 1903 not a single California school was engaged in a contract with the Office of Indian Affairs.[34] Only twelve existed in the entire nation, and that number was declining rapidly.

Nevertheless, by 1912, Indian Service representatives began to move aggressively toward forcing state, county, and local officials into admitting Indians into public schools. C. E. Kelsey, a highly respected special agent for the California Indians, advised his colleague Calvin

Asbury, special agent in Reno, of the situation as follows:[35]

> In getting Indian children into the public schools, as to the policy and advisability of which I agree with you wholly we have no difficulty with the State Superintendent and not much difficulty with the county superintendents. The difficulty lies with the "Plain People." When people are full of the race prejudice against Indians they refuse to reason. In most districts where there are any considerable number of Indian children, they simply refuse to allow Indians to attend. In something like 120 school districts in California Indians are allowed to attend school. These are mostly small districts that would lapse without the Indians.

Kelsey and other Indian Service representatives were prepared to force the issue, preferring integrated public school education for Indians where possible, but tolerating segregated facilities as an interim arrangement when this was the only alternative. Later in the year, H. B. Peairs, Supervisor in Charge of Indian Schools, advised Asbury that it was acceptable with the Indian Service to press for compulsory attendance of Indians so long as it was done "tactfully." Appeal to the state legislature or "mixing in politics" was ruled out.[36]

The Federal willingness to accept segregated public school education for their wards closed off one of the two principal objections held by local white citizens. The remaining objection centered around being taxed for educating Indians, especially since Indians paid no property tax, living as they did on land purchased for them in 1905 and 1906 by

Kelsey on behalf of the Federal Government. Thus, given the failure of the boarding school system, the unwillingness of white communities to assume responsibility for Indian education, and a belief that public schooling would advance assimilation, the only viable option remaining was for the Government to encourage the public school attendance of Indians, including the payment of tuition to those school systems which required it.

In February, 1913, in another letter to Asbury, Kelsey revealed that the number of California school districts then admitting Indian children without aid from the Government had increased from 120 to 150, but he feared that payment of tuition to some districts could endanger that record if jealousy for Federal dollars were ever to become an issue. He also feared that establishment of separate schools would compromise the assimilation goal.[37] After October 22, 1913, the public schools tuition policy was temporarily halted when the U. S. Controller concluded that Indians were fully entitled to public school privileges free of tuition.[38] Two years later the interpretation was softened to permit tuition payments in districts where buildings needed repair. Children eligible for tuition were to be at least one quarter Indian blood and of parents who did not pay tax on real estate.

From 1915 to 1920 numerous small districts were successful in getting aid from the Office of Indian Affairs at a rate anywhere from .15 to .50 per day per student. Each agency superintendent was given authority to determine the specific amount of reimbursement, and since the Indian Service was anxious about its record, where aid was needed in order to convince local officials to admit Indians, it was generally

provided. In actual dollars the amount spent in California was small--$6,131.27 in 1919, $16,000 in 1920. Of the amount spent in 1919, virtually all was disbursed by three agencies in Northern California: Greenville, $2,239.95; Reno (for California), $1,767.20; and Round Valley, $673.66.[39]

That the public school thrust experienced early success from an attendance standpoint is clear. Whatever the quality of the educational programs provided, Indians were attending school in greater numbers than ever before. In 1915, a total of 316 Indians attended public schools in California. By 1916 the figure had risen to 1,469, and by 1919 it stood at 2,199. The last figure represented over half of the 4,579 eligible children in the state.[40] During the early 1920's agency superintendents received an annual pep talk letter from the Chief Supervisor of Indian Education reminding them of their obligation to stage a successful enrollment campagin. In 1923, for example, the slogan was "More Pupils and Better Schools."[41]

Agency superintendents appear to have cooperated with higher officials in enforcing Indian attendance at public schools. Edgar K. Miller, Superintendent and Special Dispersing Agent of the Greenville School and Agency, for one, encouraged State Attorney General U. S. Webb to enforce compulsory attendance laws for Indians, writing:[42]

> Where poverty, family environment, distance from public school etc., interfere or prevent the child attending regularly the schools of the state, I will be glad to make room for him, but we feel that such schools as this are but stepping stones to the public schools of the state

and for that reason prefer to get all Indian children into the public schools.

For all its interest in stimulating public school attendance, the Federal Government was treading on an area of state responsibility. The cooperation of state, county, and local school officials would be necessary before appreciable gains could be made in the quantity and quality of Indian education. With only an occasional exception, State Department of Education officials proved cooperative. The exceptions serve to point up the Federal Government's resolve to see acculturation carried forward at all costs.

Correspondence of the early and middle 1920's, for example, reveal a mutual disrespect between W. W. Coon, Supervisor of Indian Education for the Pacific Coast District, and Georgiana Carden, California's Supervisor of Attendance for the State Department of Education. Although an aggressive enforcer of state attendance laws for Indians and others, Carden was convinced that Indian education required special attention and sincerely felt that the Federally imposed compulsory acculturation requirement was not in the Indians' best interest. Her differences with Coon had more to do with perceived attitudes than with specific policies. She described their two hour meeting in the summer of 1922 as producing on his part "not one word, look, or tone [indicating] the slightest interest in the welfare of Indian children."[43] His principal concern, as perceived by Carden, was simply to get Indians enrolled.

There is every reason to believe that the enforcement of attendance requirements was handled with conviction by Federal and state officials.

County enforcement was a bit more erratic, requiring in may cases the help and stimulation of the state supervisor of attendance. But even on the county level there was a general assumption that Indian children counted for financial reimbursement from the state and thus their attendance was expected. San Diego County's supervisor of attendance captured the dominant ideological orientation of the day toward compulsory attendance by the slogan printed in capital letters on her letterhead: "Every child in school, every day, on time."

Had it not been for some jurisdictional squabbling and lack of clarity regarding legal responsibility, the enforcement of Indian attendance would have been more faithful than it was. The principal problem concerned whether or not county attendance officers could or should enter foot on Federal property to enforce compulsory attendance requirements. Some county attendance officials and district attorneys favored doing so; some did not. Often the Indian was, in the words of the superintendent at Riverside's Sherman Institute, "kicked from pillar to post" while officials from different jurisdictions debated who was responsible for his welfare.[44] The validity of this assertion was made poignantly clear in 1921 when the Secretary of Interior announced a willingness to have state officials enforce attendance laws on reservations, but the California Legislature cut off public school attendance by Indians in districts where the U. S. Government had established Indian schools, or in areas within three miles of such schools.[45]

The legislation, stimulated by local anti-Indian sentiment, represented something of a final shot at exclusion by the state. Inside of a few months the California Attorney General ruled that the legislature

had no power to deprive Indian children of the right to attend public school, but his ruling was not decisive. Not until 1924 when Pike Piper filed suit on behalf of his daugnter Alice was the issue brought to a head. The girl had been refused admission to the Big Pine School in Inyo County solely on grounds that she was an Indian and had access to a Federal school. The fact that she had never lived in a tribal relationship on Indian land made little difference to district officials. The finding of the California Supreme Court in favor of the plaintiff had the effect over the next several years of ending the exclusion--but not the segregation--of Indians from public schools, and overturning the 1921 legislation on the subject.[46]

Two other major issues remained unsolved, namely the question of segregation and the question of quality. There would be no early solution to either. Five separate schools for Indians were maintained in 1926-27; four in 1927-28; six in 1928-29 through 1931-32.[47] The marked rise of public school attendance among Indians, and a measure of cooperation between Federal and state officials in realizing this joint objective, does not mask the fact that rarely did Indians receive anything like an education comparable in quality to that received by white city dwellers, or even whites attending rural schools in the same vicinity as Indians. In the rural northern counties of the state, especially Mendocino, Lake, and Modoc, the record was especially bleak. A rather systematic public health survey of Indians in Northern California, published by the state in 1921, revealed the extent to which 356 of 517 Indians seen by the survey team had been educated. Of the 356 respondents, 187 claimed never to have attended school. Of the 169 who had

completed one or more years of schooling, 77 had completed the fourth grade or higher. That same survey concluded that Indians in the northeastern part of the state were "not receiving any education worthy of the name."[48]

Other reports from the field were similarly grim. Rural school districts complained about Indians for various reasons, e.g. lack of tuition support from the Government, difficulties in teaching whites and Indians in the same classroom, or alleged health problems. In some places, Fresno, for example, Indian children were reported doing well in the public schools, but in the small town of Sycamore, also in the Central Valley, the Indian school was described by Georgiana Carden as "just like all the others--even to the lack of drinking water anywhere near."[49]

In places where the concentration of Indians was heaviest, such as Lake County, the reports were especially grim. In commenting on the local vs. Federal conflict in Kelseyville, Carden wrote that "everyone is seeking to prove and none care a tinker's darn about the Indians." After a visit to Kelseyville on April 2, 1923, she noted in her diary that the "Indian as an object of duty does not exist, as a means of attaining certain a.d.a.--he exists and will be held on to--Hopeless as far as Kelseyville is concerned."[50]

Inferior educational opportunity was just one of several ramifications of Indian poverty. Nevertheless, by the 1920's it appeared that the acculturation goal was producing some of the results desired of it, at least for those Indians who settled in the largest cities. The most detailed investigation from the era was Lewis Meriam's Problem of Indian Administration, a 1928 study sponsored by the Institute of Govern-

ment Research and funded by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. In contrast to the picture of segregation, broad based discrimination and poverty experienced by rural Indians in California, the Meriam Report included a detailed study of urban Indians in California, specifically those residing in Los Angeles, Torrance, and Sacramento. In Los Angeles and its suburb of Torrance, a total of 105 individuals were interviewed, with 10 others visited in Sacramento. Most were full-blooded California Indians.

The total Indian population of Los Angeles at the time was estimated at between 800 and 1,000. Owing to its many industrial opportunities, its proximity to Sherman Institute at Riverside, and good housing opportunities, Los Angeles was portrayed favorably by the Indians interviewed. "Not a single Indian family visited in Los Angeles," maintained the report, "was found to be living at a standard definitely below the level of health and decency."[51] Some poverty was found, but no slum conditions were detected. Job discrimination existed, but generally employers spoke well of Indian employees, comparing them favorably to other workers. The overall picture was one of Indians actively working to adapt fully to American culture, consequently few favored strictly Indian schools except for vocational training when other alternatives were not present. No public school discrimination was reported.

The election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932 and the arrival on the national scene of Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier in 1933 produced a substantial shift in attitude nationally toward Indians. "In the long run, the Indians must be their own saviors and their own helpers," announced the new Commissioner. Government paternalism would be decreased, but Government assistance increased. Indian customs were

to be revitalized and respected.[52] Symbolic of this position was the removal in 1934 of an insistence that only English be spoken in Indian schools. Perhaps the Indian Reorganization Act of 1933 and Commissioner Collier's influence came too late to save the tribal heritage of many Indians. City Indians were experiencing moderate success in adapting to the dominant culture, while many rural Indians were becoming migratory laborers. According to the California Human Dependency Survey of 1936, Indian culture had been "virtually liquidated."[53]

Doubtlessly the most important educational provision of the new administration was the Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934. Consistent with a trend which had been developing over the past decade of educating Indians in public schools, the Secretary of the Interior was authorized under the act to enter into contracts with states, providing financial assistance for their schools. Indians residing on or near Federal trust land, but attending public schools, became the intended beneficiaries. In 1935 California became the first state to enter into such a contract. From that time until the termination policy of the Eisenhower administration, approximately $300,000 per year came to the state from the Johnson-O'Malley source.

After reviewing 70 years of institutionalized education for Indians in California, several things are clear. Certainly a lower percentage of Indians were being reached by the educational system than was the case with children from more affluent families. Secondly, the quality of such education as was provided was dubious at best. Limitations and fluctuations in policy notwithstanding, the Federal Government did remain committed to its acculturation goal. This in itself contributed to a twin-headed form of high-handedness in implementation; the Federal effort at getting Indian children into school, and the local efforts at keeping them out.

NOTES

1. The figures listed are the most widely cited based on informed estimates. The Kelsey figure, on the other hand, is taken from his Census of Non-Reservation California Indians, 1905-1906, Archeological Research Facility, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley. Good sources for the other figures are: William H. Ellison, "The Federal Indian Policy in California, 1846-1860," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 9 (June, 1922), 39-40; and Frederick M. Hodge, ed., Handbook of American Indians, North of Mexico, Bulletin no. 20, (Washington: Bureau of American Ethnology, 1907-1910).

2. An excellent presentation of attitudes held by public officials and private citizens toward Indians during the early years of statehood is found in Robert F. Heizer and Alan F. Almquist, The Other Californians: Prejudice and Discrimination under Spain, Mexico and the United States to 1920 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

3. Reference to such an instance is discussed in letters from A. H. Dodge to [Governor William Irwin], September 17, 1873, and Lt. Col. A. D. Nelson to Asst. Adjutant General, September 22, 1973, California Archives, Sacramento, Calif., Indian War Files, 1860-1881, Box 2.

4. Heizer and Almquist, Other Californians, pp. 39-40.

5. The California Teacher, 4 (January, 1867), 128. Sec. 56 of the Statutes of California did permit any board of trustees by a majority vote to admit "in to any public school half-breed Indian children who live in white families or under guardianship of white persons." California Statutes, March 24, 1866, c. 342, sec. 56.

6. According to Edward F. Beale, Superintendent of Indian Affairs

for California, the land provided Indians in the treaties was the "most barren and sterile" in the state, and of a quality that "only a half-slaved and defenseless people would have consented to receive." U. S. Treaties, etc., 1850-1853, Message from the President of the United States communicating eighteen treaties made with Indians in California, 1851-1852, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1905), p. 8.

7. Ibid.

8. U. S., Office of Indian Affairs, Reports on Indian Affairs, California Superintendency, 1861-1871, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1861-1871), No. 19, p. 98.

9. U. S., Commissioner of Education, Bureau of Education Reports, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1872), p. 418.

10. U. S., Secretary of Interior, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1885), p. 111.

11. U. S., Commissioner of Education, Special Report on Indian Education, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1888), p. 175.

12. Evelyn C. Adams, American Indian Education (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1971), pp. 54-55.

13. Rules 19 and 54 are the ones referred to; U. S., Office of Indian Affairs, Rules for the Indian School Service, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900). The harsher aspects of student recruitment and the withholding of rations was officially ended in 1894.

14. Letter from Commissioner W. S. Jones, to the Superintendent, Greenville School, California, January 13, 1902, National Archives, Archives Branch, San Francisco, California.

15. "How Far are the Principles of Education Along Indigenous Lines Applicable to American Indians," Pedagogical Seminary, 15 (September, 1908), 365-369.

16. The Rincon Day School in the Palo Agency was discontinued and its two students transferred to a public school in 1910. Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1910, p. 18.

17. Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1904, p. 166.

18. Ibid., p. 436.

19. Letter from Superintendent [unnamed, probably Dale H. Reed.] to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, February 5, 1917, National Archives, Archives Branch, San Francisco, California; Record Group 75, Files of Special Indian Agent Col. L. A. Dorrington, Box 2.

20. Investigation, Greenville Indian School, Desertion of Katherine Dick, Edith Buckskin, Rosa Jones, Elweza Stonecoal, Mollie Lowry, 1916, Dorrington File, Box No. 6.

21. Letter from Superintendent Eugene M. Tardy to Asst. Commissioner E. B. Merrit, November, 1916, Dorrington File, Box 4.

22. Letter from Commissioner Cato Sells to Mr. Raken, December 22, 1916, Dorrington File, Box 4.

23. Dorrington File, Box 4.

24. California, Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1924, p. 65., National Archives, Archives Branch, Los Angeles, California, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Records of the Mission Agency, Box 58462.

25. Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1918, p. 20.

26. Evelyn C. Adams, American Indian Education, p. 68.

27. The data given are calculated from figures contained in file No. 58471, National Archives, Archives Branch, Los Angeles, California.

28. National Archives, Archives Branch, Los Angeles, California, Box 58477.

29. Letter from Mary Helen Fee to Superintendent C. L. Ellis, June 27, 1923, National Archives, Archives Branch, Los Angeles, California, Dorrington File, Box 9.

31. Percentages are calculated from census statistics found in: California, Fourteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1890, pp.6-7.

32. Adams, American Indian Education, p. 63.

33. Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1894, p.14.

34. Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1903, p. 21.

35. Letter from C. E. Kelsey to Calvin H. Asbury, October 17, 1912, Dorrington File, Box 6.

36. Letter from H.B. Peairs to Calvin H. Asbury, December 24, 1912, Dorrington File, Box 10.

37. Letter from C. E. Kelsey to Calvin H. Asbury, February 4, 1912, Dorrington File, Box 6.

38. Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1914, p.8.

39. Malcolm McDowell, "Report of the Landless Indians of California," 1919, p. 19; Department of Special Collections, University of Oregon Library, Eugene, Oscar H. Lipps Papers.

40. Two reports prepared by Government staff in 1919 and 1920 explain in detail the status of Indian education in California during this period. See Malcolm McDowell, "Report of the Landless Indians of

California," 1919; also O. H. Lipps and L. F. Michaels, "Confidential Report on Conditions of California Indians," June 15, 1920, University of Oregon Library, Eugene, Department of Special Collections, Oscar H. Lipps Papers.

41. Letter from H. B. Peairs to All Superintendents, June 12, 1923, National Archives, Archives Branch, Los Angeles, California.

42. April 12, 1917, California State Archives, Sacramento, California.

43. Georgiana Caroline Carden, Correspondence and Papers, MS No. 68/129.

44. Letter from Superintendent [F. M. Conser] to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 2, 1920, National Archives, Archives Branch, Los Angeles, California.

45. California Statues, 1921, Ch. 685, Sec. 1662.

46. Piper v.s. Big Pine School District of Inyo County, 193 Cal 664 (1924).

47. Information obtained from the Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the years given.

48. A Survey of the Indians of Northeastern California, (Sacramento: California State Board of Health, [1920-1921], p. 82.

49. Carden, Correspondence and Papers, October 23, 1922.

50. Ibid., August 11, 1923.

51. Lewis Meriam, Problem of Indian Administration, Institute of Government Research, Studies in Administration (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1928), p. 716.

52. "Press Release," April 21, 1933, Lipps Papers.

53. "Human Dependency and Economic Survey, Sacramento, California, Indian Jurisdiction," (Denver: Office of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, May 1936), p. 15. (Mimeographed.)